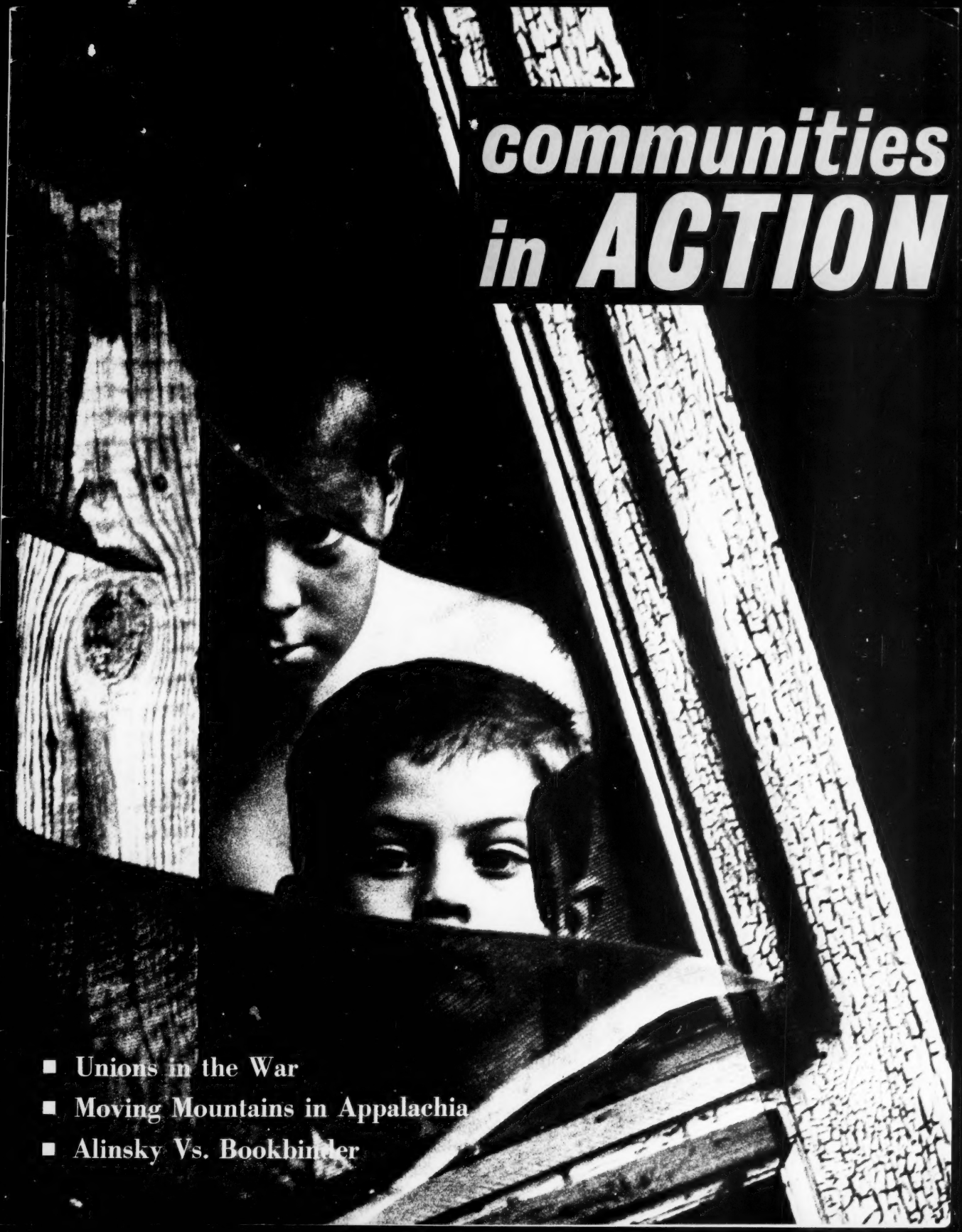
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communities in ACTION

VOLUME 1 NO. 2 JULY 1966

a periodical account of the War on Poverty, is published by the Office of Economic Opportunity.

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Communication in Chicago

A delightful old children's story tells of a group of blind men who "saw" an elephant by each touching a different part of him.

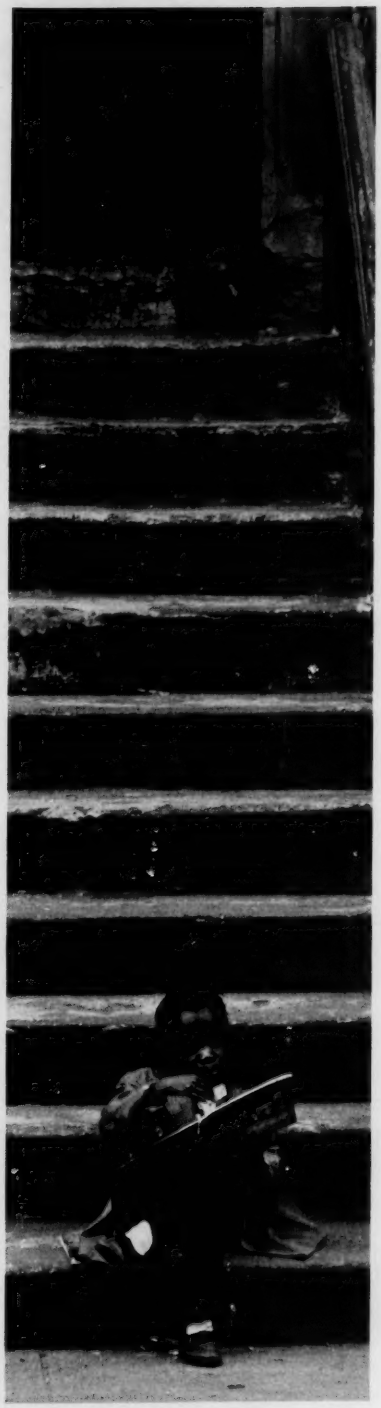
You remember how it ended up? The elephant was long and trunk-like or thin like a tail or flappy like a huge ear and so on. Well, that old children's story has a modern day application for staff members of the Chicago Committee on Urban Opportunity: communication is what you want to make of it.

with the people

The CCUO, Chicago's official Community Action Agency, has been trying to prick pins in that old communications saw that you can't communicate in writing with people below a certain literacy level.

Since shortly after opening its first neighborhood center—there are seven Urban Progress Centers now —CCUO has been publishing community newsletters which are written, laid out, designed and photographed with the sole purpose of communicating with the poor!

Each center publishes a newsletter quarterly. Each issue has a circulation of from 10,000 in the unit with the smallest target population (85,000) to 15,000 in those with the largest (155,000).



Resident nonprofessionals distribute the newsletters by hand during house calls on their neighbors. They are left as a more permanent reminder of the services and programs available in their center.

Each newsletter has the same format. It is called "With The People" and has as its logotype the outline from the community map of their neighborhood. It is printed in a 10-point century schoolbook serif type on 60-pound offset stock. Pictures are larger than usual to go along with the larger-than-normal typesize. Heads are Franklin Gothic condensed italic. The newsletter is 11 x 14 single fold.

While the newsletters are put together by the staff of the CCUO's Public Information Division, center staff help gather the information and pinpoint events as they occur which would bear reporting in the next newsletter. This is especially important for photographs.

Since CCUO administers all programs funded through OEO except work study, work experience and VISTA there is a wide variety of programs about which to write.

The average issue contains at least eight stories, varying in length from four paragraphs to 15 and at least eight pictures. The copy "hole" is usually about 2,500 words.

The first two issues of each newsletter served to introduce the center, the program and the projects operating in that neighborhood. Each issue made the point at several places that the center welcomed everyone and that it was there for neighborhood people.

The style of writing, the language, everything about "With The People" is directed toward the person not

communicated with through normal channels.

Emphasis is always placed on results, something that has happened to a neighbor, a success story that will show people being helped.

Three of the newsletters, published in centers where there is a large Spanish-speaking population, have sections written in Spanish.

The newsletters are constantly undergoing changes. One immediate change will be the scope of distribution. Staff members of delegate agencies which operate programs in each center area will receive copies to help in interpreting the center program to participants in their project. In addition, store owners and other businessmen in the area will be kept informed so they can pass on information to their customers.

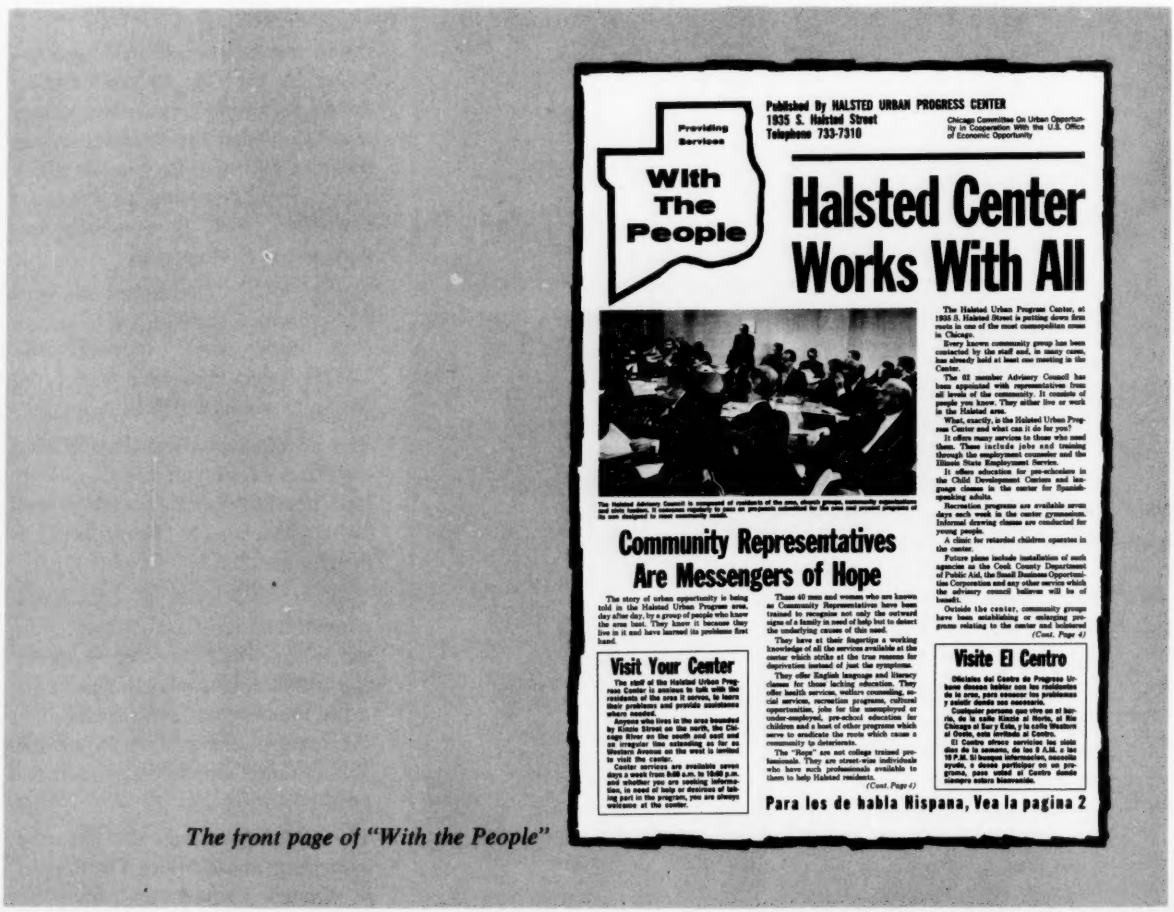
As a result of panel discussions at a recent conference of the National Association for Community Development, the CCUO is taking a hint from the Cincinnati anti-poverty agency and exploring the possibility of leaving a few newsletters in laundromats for neighborhood women to read while doing the family wash.

Another change will see center staff take over more and more of the gathering—and hopefully the writing—of newsletters under the direction and guidance of public information staff members.

Make no mistake, though. The newsletters will not be allowed to become less professional. They are extremely difficult to write, as their authors can attest, because they are not written "down" to people. They are written in their terms, using symbols that have meaning to a person who lives in the subculture of poverty.

Chicago expects these newsletters to become a valuable weapon in the continual battle of seeing to it that there is an effective communication between people. It wants to avoid that communications problem the blind men had with the elephant.

—PETER M. DEUEL



Providing Services

With The People

Published By HALSTED URBAN PROGRESS CENTER
1935 S. Halsted Street
Telephone 733-7310

Chicago Committee On Urban Opportunity in Cooperation With the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity

Halsted Center Works With All

The Halsted Urban Progress Center, at 1935 S. Halsted Street is putting down firm roots in one of the most cosmopolitan areas in Chicago.

Every known community group has been contacted by the staff and, in many cases, has already held at least one meeting in the Center.

The 62 member Advisory Council has been appointed with representatives from all levels of the community. It consists of people you know. They either live or work in the Halsted area.

What, exactly, is the Halsted Urban Progress Center and what can it do for you?

It offers many services to those who need them. These include jobs and training through the employment counselor and the Illinois State Employment Service.

It offers education for pre-schoolers in the Child Development Centers and language classes in the center for Spanish-speaking adults.

Recreation programs are available seven days each week in the center gymnasium. Informal drawing classes are conducted for young people.

A clinic for retarded children operates in the center.

Future plans include installation of such agencies as the Cook County Department of Public Aid, the Small Business Opportunities Corporation and any other service which the advisory council believes will be of benefit.

Outside the center, community groups have been establishing or enlarging programs relating to the center and bolstered

(Cont. Page 4)

Community Representatives Are Messengers of Hope

The story of urban opportunity is being told in the Halsted Urban Progress Center day after day, by a group of people who know the area best. They know it because they live in it and have learned its problems first hand.

These 40 men and women who are known as Community Representatives have been trained to recognize not only the outward signs of a family in need of help but to detect the underlying causes of this need.

They have at their fingertips a working knowledge of all the services available at the center which strike at the true reasons for deprivation instead of just the symptoms.

They offer English language and literacy classes for those lacking education. They offer health services, welfare counseling, social services, recreation programs, cultural opportunities, jobs for the unemployed or under-employed, pre-school education for children and a host of other programs which serve to eradicate the roots which cause a community to deteriorate.

The "Reps" are not college trained professionals. They are street-wise individuals who have such professionals available to them to help Halsted residents.

(Cont. Page 4)

Visit Your Center

The staff of the Halsted Urban Progress Center is anxious to talk with the residents of the area it serves, to learn their problems and provide assistance where needed.

Anyone who lives in the area bounded by Kinzie Street on the north, the Chicago River on the south and east and an irregular line extending as far as Western Avenue on the west is invited to visit the center.

Center services are available seven days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and whether you are seeking information, in need of help or desirous of taking part in the program, you are always welcome at the center.

Visite El Centro

Oficiales del Centro de Progreso Urbano desean hablar con los residentes de la area, para conocer los problemas y asistir donde sea necesario.

Cualquier persona que viva en el sector, de la calle Kinzie al Norte, al Rio Chicago al Sur y Este, y la calle Western al Oeste, esta invitado al Centro.

El Centro ofrece servicios las siete dias de la semana, de las 8 A.M. a las 10 P.M. Si buscas informacion, necesita ayuda, o desea participar en un programa, pase usted al Centro donde siempre estara bienvenido.

Para los de habla Hispana, Vea la pagina 2

The front page of "With the People"

the War

Scratch almost any union leader and you will find he was once poor himself, that he believes a union is a democratic device by which its members, largely, have lifted themselves out of poverty . . . and further, that he and his organization have an obligation to help others help themselves.

For these reasons the AFL-CIO and other unions support OEO programs through political and legislative activities. They also support many other measures which are part of the larger war on poverty. These include civil rights, increased unemployment compensation, adequate workmen's compensation, higher social security and welfare benefits, regional development, programs to increase the number of jobs available, increases in the minimum wage, Medicare and other legislation aimed at helping the poor and other Americans.

AFL-CIO leaders have been involved in OEO from the very beginning. A. Phillip Randolph, president of the Sleeping Car Porters, and Miles Stanley, director of the AFL-CIO anti-poverty office, are members of OEO's National Advisory Council.

David Sullivan, president of the Building Services Employees International Union, is chairman of OEO's Labor Advisory Council and 12 other top trade union officials are also council members.

Many local union officials, nearly 2,000, now serve on governing boards of local community action agencies.

A dramatic example of union leadership in CAP development has unfolded in Cincinnati, Ohio. There, Al Bilick, head of the local AFL-CIO Labor Council, served as president of the city's Community Action Commission in its first year of operation in 1965. Bilick's organization was already deeply involved in community problems before OEO came into existence.

In 1963, Cincinnati labor and civil rights groups staged a successful march for jobs and freedom. Following the lead of Congress' inquiry that year into the nature and extent of poverty in America, Cincinnati's City Council was urged to conduct its own investigation by those mobilizing the jobs and freedom campaign.

Theodore M. Berry, then a Cincinnati city councilman, and chairman of the council's welfare committee, headed this investigation. When the Economic Opportunity Act was signed into law, Berry became director of Community Action Programs for OEO.

Thus with labor supplying much of the push, Cincinnati launched its own Community Action Program within weeks after the anti-poverty legislation became national law.

But labor's involvement in the War, as Bilik points out, goes beyond the broad outline of community action in Cincinnati or in the nation. He said, "Job training programs directly concern us and we are involved."

To follow through on the basic issues of employment, the Cincinnati AFL-CIO Labor Council co-sponsors a unique program with the Neighborhood Youth Corps and the city's rehabilitation division.

This project puts together skilled union craftsmen, crews of youngsters and owner-residents of run-down houses in poor neighborhoods who qualify for rehabilitation grants of up to $1,500 from the Federal Housing Administration.

Four local unions of painters, plasterers, carpenters and cement masons supply craftsmen who, paid at the prevailing union rate, serve as foremen and instructors for crews of boys age 16 to 22, who receive $1.25 an hour.

This program has been so well received the Labor Department is now being asked to approve an expanded two-year operation.

Out in California, the Alameda County AFL-CIO Central Labor Council has also concentrated on the job problem. This county includes the city of Oakland.

In May of 1965, the council submitted a plan to OEO for a twelve-week summer job project for the employment of 200 jobless youths in various types of community work, all under supervision of the Labor Council.

Last June 9, the OEO approved a grant of $235,000 for the project.

A project director and staff of supervisors and foreman-instructors were hired, largely from the ranks of retired or unemployed union members, and a list of proposed work projects was obtained from community non-profit agencies.

Job applicants were sought through schools, church organizations, the state employment service, welfare rolls, youth centers—and police records. Requirements were: age 16 to 21, family income of not more than $4,000 a year for a family of four (less for a smaller family) and willingness to work.

The task of recruitment was an agonizing one. In less than three days, nearly 700 had applied for the 200 openings. Some 200 were finally chosen, 140 boys and 60 girls.

Nearly a third were on parole or probation or had previous police records—the sort of kids who nine times out of ten would be rejected by traditional social agencies. Most came from families receiving public assistance. A high proportion were school dropouts. About 90 per cent were Negro.

With few exceptions, the young workers tackled their tasks with zest and hustle. The work, and the prospect of regular $1.25-an-hour wages, seemed to promote new feelings of self-respect, ambition and responsibility. Many opened bank accounts for the first time in their lives. They began to dress better, both on and off the job. A supervisor of a group of girls reported that her charges had matured remarkably in just a few weeks—"no more gum chewing and bubble popping, and they've gained a new respect for themselves and each other."

Not the least significant aspect of the project was the effect it had on the foreman-instructors. Harold Wilson, the labor council's community services director who acted as overall project coordinator, reported:

"We conceived this project with the idea that experienced working men could guide kids in proper work channels. This has happened just as we foresaw. What we didn't foresee was how deeply the experienced workers would be affected, too. They've come to understand these kids and their problems; they've gotten not only involved but enthused."

Another typical union-inspired project has 45 young men undergoing training as surveyor's aides in a Neighborhood Youth Corps project sponsored by Operating Engineers Local 545 in upstate New York and the New York State Department of Public Works. They have been doing so well most of them will be put to work before they finish their scheduled 21 weeks of instruction.

The project was developed by Local

545, with help from the International Union, to fill a widening shortage of men qualified to work in surveying gangs. Instruction is given by experts from the union's ranks.

Another interesting union-backed program is the custodial training project of the Building Services Employees International Union in Washington, D. C. This is a pilot project sponsored by BSEIU and its locals 82 and 536 in cooperation with the U. S. Office of Education.

"Our main purpose in sponsoring this school," says BSEIU President David Sullivan, "is to secure jobs for unemployed workers after they have completed the 12-week course."

"The school represents a concrete effort to support the War on Poverty. If it is successful, we hope to establish similar schools in other cities."

Every day, the students make their facilities sparkle. They are learning the techniques of efficient cleaning from experienced teachers. And, in remedial education classes, they are brushing up on English and basic math.

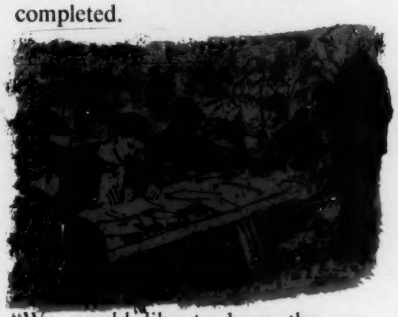
On the work skills side, they learn how to "strip" a floor, use mops and waxes, operate buffing machines and clean rugs and windows efficiently and carefully.

These trainees used to be "hard-core" unemployed or chronically unemployed. They don't plan to be any more.

Unionists are workers with skills to offer, and some are offering them free. Many are among the 2300 VISTA Volunteers who are giving their time, energy and concern to poverty programs of all sorts throughout the country. There is also some union involvement in the Job Corps now and strong prospects of unions taking a very large part in many Job Corps camps.

One of the most interesting programs involving unions and OEO was described by Sargent Shriver at the recent AFL-CIO convention in San Francisco. This is the Appalachian AFL-CIO trade union program which includes training and a year of community action work for 100 leaders of AFL-CIO city, county and state councils in ten Appalachian states.

The 100 people now in training at the University of West Virginia will return to their communities after their initial two-week program is completed.



"We would like to have the program in half a dozen different parts of the United States" Shriver told the AFL-CIO convention, "in the iron range area, in the northeastern states, in the Ozarks, in the West, in the Rocky mountains and in the South."

The programs described above and a dozen others in development indicate a very fruitful expanding union involvement in all aspects of America's War on Poverty.

But of course some of the poor see unions as just another part of the establishment which is holding them back. In fact, in the area of discrimination in employment, some of the poor hold unions responsible for discrimination against minority groups. Of course unions don't have any voice whatsoever in who most employers hire, but they do have some influence in the building trades, where there have been some problems.

The national leadership of the AFL-CIO is working hard to help end discrimination.

"Segregation in unions is no better than segregation in schools, and we hope that the problem will be eliminated in a short period of time," Donald Slaiman, AFL-CIO Director of Civil Rights, recently said.

"Not only do we urge segregated unions, on the basis of AFL-CIO policy, to merge with all possible speed, but we also notify them that these laws exist," Slaiman said. "We tell them that they are subject to complaint (for discriminating) and that the law is being violated."

Some progress in this area has been noted by Ben D. Segal, of the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. He has said:

"For instance, there are eight Negro apprentices and several journeymen in the electrician's local here in Washington. Just a few years ago there were none."

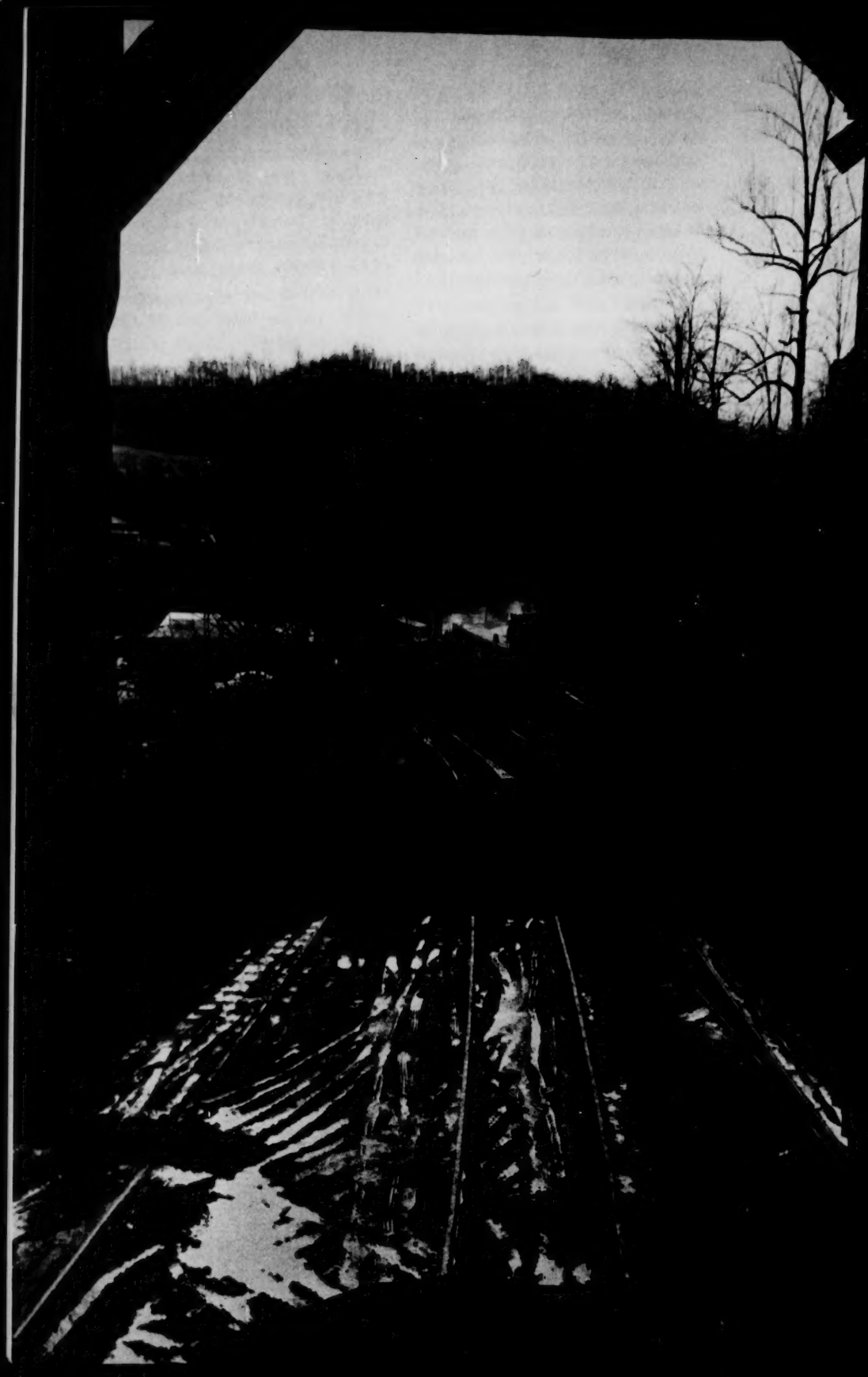
And last month the AFL-CIO and the National Urban League joined hands to help prepare Negro youths for apprenticeship training in unions. Another similar project was set up earlier in Chicago by Building Trades Unions together with employers, the federal government, the city government and civil rights organizations. So there are indications of progress.

It should now be clear that AFL-CIO leaders are in the OEO effort to the hilt. Together with OEO they are combatting discrimination and poverty by participating in planning at the national level and implementation at the local level.

AFL-CIO President George Meany recently wrote:

"The time to end poverty is now—in the decade of the Sixties. The means are available; they need only to be used."

—THOMAS COSGROVE



Moving Mountains in Appalachia

The Challenge of Stinking Creek

"You want to see how we go about community organization in Knox County, Kentucky?"

Jim Kendrick asked this. A big jovial young man, Jim used to be a church social worker, a log-roller ("That's rough work!"). He comes from Indiana and now directs the Knox County Economic Opportunity Council. He knows this mountain country and its people.

The visitor said he would like to see how the poverty war was being waged in this part of Appalachia.

Kendrick's office is in the modern little city hall in Barbourville, a busy in-step-with-the-times town; but five minutes away by car, heading into mountain country, the contrasts between the town and rural Kentucky mount as each mile goes by.

Kendrick drove casually around hairpin turns on a mountain road.

"We're a little close to the edge," the visitor said uneasily, looking down into a bottomless valley just beyond the car wheels.

"Don't worry," says Kendrick. "I'm in here, too."

Mountain roads are of a kind of gravel that kicks up clouds of dust. Pebbles struck the car sides like machine gun bullets.

"These roads are the automobile makers' delight," Kendrick said. "Your springs conk out quickly and the finish is shot. No sooner than you buy a car," he said, "it's time to replace it."

Houses, spaced a mile or so apart at roadside, looked awful. "Are these homes of impoverished families?" he was asked.

"Not by our standards," he answered. "In rural Kentucky, it is a kind of rule of thumb that people who live next to the road are much better off than people back in the cricks and hollows."

"Cricks? Hollows?" the passenger wondered. "Where?"

"All up in there," Kendrick pointed.

All to be seen were the beautiful rolling green mountains of Kentucky that rose gently but mightily in all directions.

"I can't see anything. You mean people live up there? How do they get in and out?"

His visitor's incredulity amused Kendrick. He said: "That's what makes organizing communities in our part of the country such a challenge."

Jim stopped at a stone building just off the road. The American flag flew atop a pole on the parking lot.

"Welcome to Stinking Creek," he said. "We'll have to make the rest of the trip in a Scout truck; my car couldn't stand where we're going."

"Stinking Creek? You're kidding!"

A slim young man stepped out of the building. Jim made introductions all around. "This is Escoe Smith. He is director of Messer Community Center. This building used to be a one-room schoolhouse but we took it over as a CAP center. We made some repairs and additions."

"And rebuilt the hole the dynamite made," added Escoe.

"Dynamite?"

Kendrick said casually: "Someone tried to blow up the building when we first moved in."

"Blow it up. Why?"

"There are some very strong-minded folks in these mountains," said Kendrick. He did not elaborate.

Escoe Smith had been talking with a young man about employment possibilities in Lexington, Kentucky, some 100 miles north. He wrapped up this conversation and came back to the new arrivals.

"One of our community center serv-

Photo by George De Vincent

ices is to tell folks what work is available," he explained, "But there is little work around here for anybody. This used to be a logging and mining country but that is just about shot."

"Most folks depend on public assistance for survival," said Kendrick.

"We'll go on up Alex Creek and visit with Ted Honeycutt," said Smith. "He doesn't mind company."

Kendrick and visitors climbed into the Scout. Abruptly he turned off the main road and eased the vehicle down a hilly slope toward Stinking Creek, a shallow stream below and parallel to the highway.

One of the visitors tried to sound casual. "Oh, you're going to cross the creek."

"No, we are going to drive *down* the creek."

Kendrick aimed the truck at the stream—water sprayed out from under the wheels—and drove downstream.

After five minutes of slow, watery travel, the Scout nosed up out of the water to the creek bank.

"This is Alex Creek; we go over dry land along this trail now to Honeycutt's place."

The pathway was rocky and had not progressed beyond a difficult footpath since the time Indians were the only Kentuckians. It took 20 minutes of tire-snarling, engine-whining, inch-by-inch driving to move the truck a quarter of a mile.

Kendrick talked as he drove. "I'm thinking seriously of putting in a requisition for surplus Army mules for our community organizers to get up into the hollows. When we asked for front-wheel drive trucks some fellow from OEO headquarters killed the request. Another OEO guy came here and took a trip with us similar to this one and went back so shaken he doubled our original request. Of course headquarters still won't give us front wheel drive; but we are not kidding. This is typical of what terrain we must cover."

An abandoned cabin stood ahead to the left. "People throw up houses here. Sometimes the cabins collapse and they just pick up and move someplace else in the hollow," he said.

He did not mean to frighten his guests, Kendrick went on, but in Knox County the rural poor lived on just such terrain. "We have a good Community Action Program — health services, day care centers, basic education, things like that— but as you can see, reaching folks to let them know is a gigantic, tedious undertaking." In the city, you can distribute leaflets, broadcast, cover a city block and reach hundreds of the poor; but, as you can see, since we turned up into Alex Creek, even driving, we haven't reached our first person yet. Add up those man-hours and you'll see part of the problem in Appalachia."

Finally, the pathway smoothed out a trifle and a cabin on wooden stilts perched ahead.

Escoe said, "That's Ted's place."

Cotton print wash flew on a clothes line on the porch. Chickens cackled in the front yard. The backyard was level for 20 yards, then the land shot up abruptly at that point into a mountain. No sign of human life.

"You'd better go on ahead, Escoe," suggested Kendrick.

Escoe got out of the truck, walked up to the cabin, rapped on the door.

"Ted, you there?"

After a long pause, the door opened and a tall giant of a red-faced man stepped onto the porch.

"It's Escoe, Ted. Just happened to be passing by; thought I'd look in on you. Got some folks with me."

Ted smiled and shook Escoe's hand. If it seemed slightly bizarre that a truck of four strangers just happened to pull up in such a desolate valley the man named Ted gave no sign.

"Come on in." Escoe motioned to one of his companions to follow. Kendrick said "Leave your cameras until Escoe says it's all right."

There was no light inside Honycutt's home except what the sun could sneak through the covered-over windows. The man sat on a sagging couch. Escoe took a straight-back chair near a pot-bellied stove and the other visitor sat in a rocker near the door. This was a living room and in one corner was a high brass bed where a little boy lay sleeping. The house smelled of coal and soot.

"My boy don't feel so peppy," said Honeycutt. The child's breath was raspy. Something was wrong with his throat.

Escoe paced his conversation slowly, carefully. Later it was to be explained by a veteran Appalachian worker that you never took anything for granted in this country. "When people live in this kind of desolation, isolation and complete poverty . . . you never know what gets on a man's mind, especially if he has to spend so much time by himself or just with his immediate family . . . you never know what sudden, fierce grudge he might develop; so you pace your talk, measure your words, feel him out."

Escoe was a native of Stinking Creek, although college-trained. He knew his neighbors and so he said what he had to and was patient with the long silences between the short sentences.

At last he felt enough of Ted's mood to ask the next question.

"Wonder if it would be all right if this fellow took a few pictures of you, Ted. Might turn out good enough so's you want one for your missus."

Ted thought awhile then allowed this would be alright.

He stepped out into the sunlight and posed with Escoe. He seemed more cheerful in clear air.

"Used to be a mine on that mountain," Honeycutt explained. "They've stripped it clean now," he noted about the peak that rose from his backyard. "Used to do some mining myself but that's all gone."

Escoe said, "Now, Ted, when you can bring your boy on in for a check-up, you just might want to stop by and see how we are doing with the center. Sure could use you."

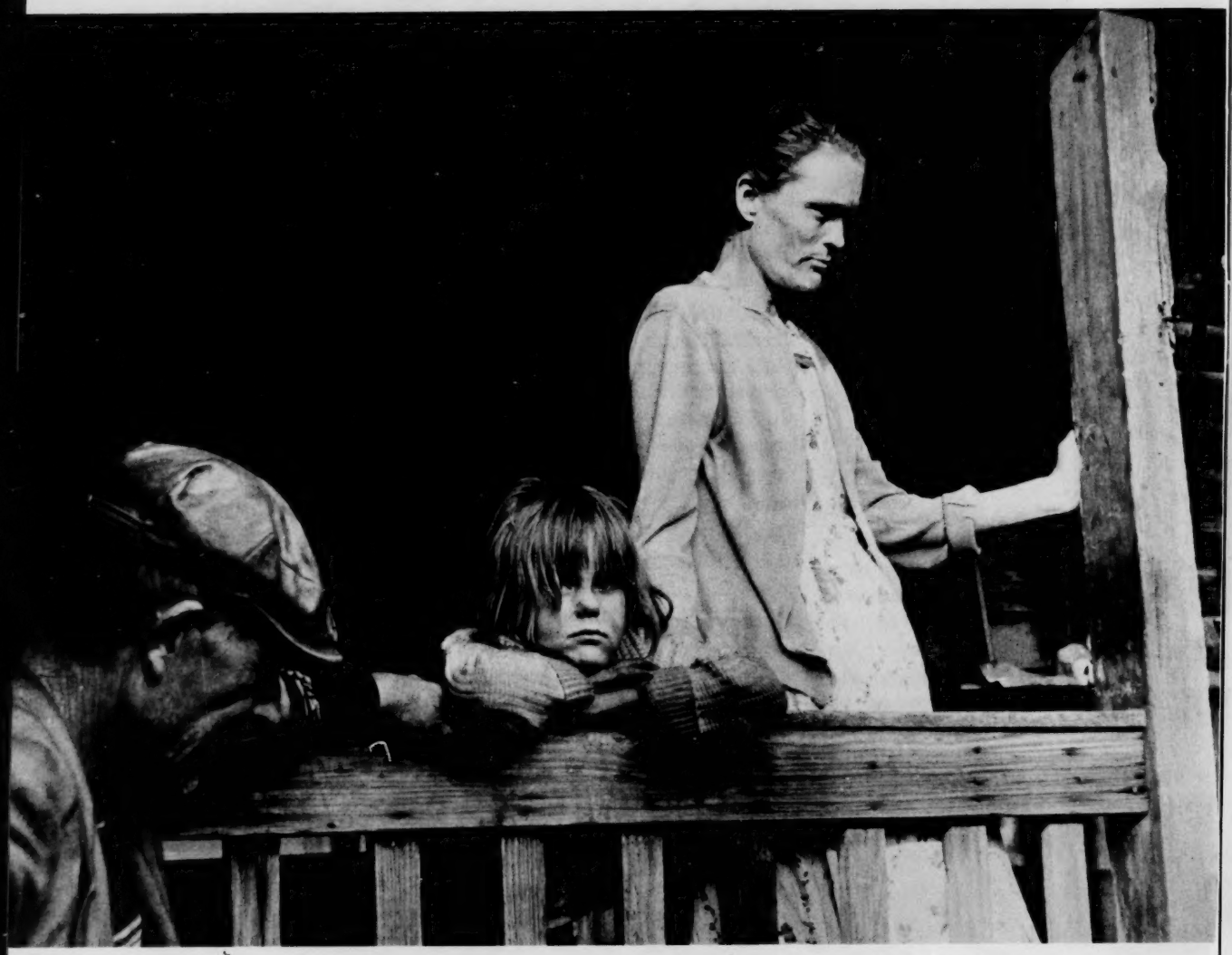
Honeycutt said, "Well if I get down that way sometime I might drop in. . . ." He did not commit himself. "You'all drop by anytime you're around," he said in parting. "Good to have company."

Kendrick revved the truck and turned around, heading back now for Messer Center on the main highway.

The visitor checked the time. "Damn, we left over an hour ago and he's the only person we've seen."

Kendrick said "That's why we made this trip."

Photo by Jane Lougee Bryant—From "Profiles of Poverty"



From Apathy to Awareness

Knox County, Kentucky, has been able to get a well-organized Community Action Program launched and moving. What follows is an account of how they began and what has happened since.

The Knox County Economic Opportunity Council was formed in late 1964 from what had been the Knox County Redevelopment Committee. Before OEO was 60 days old, the county organization had received a grant for program development and hired James Kendrick as director.

In looking for a program which would alleviate poverty in Knox County the group went to the Lend-a-Hand Center on Stinking Creek and to the Alex Creek School where Irma Gall, an extremely creative rural educator, was teaching.

In October of 1964, the idea of community centers came up at an area redevelopment meeting, and the Knox County Council adopted it because it suited the situation in the county so well. The Community Center project involves the poor in their own salvation in the sense that if they wanted anything done, they

must do it themselves, as a community. Irma Gall became director of this project.

About this time the county received its first VISTA Volunteers, who helped to organize the first two communities for community action. Rosenwald-Boone, the first, was actually two communities, white and Negro, adjoining the city of Barbourville. From two groups of people who had never had any real communication, the Council tried to get enough people together to represent both. And they succeeded.

While not perfect, Rosenwald-Boone gets the work done.

The second community, Messer, is in the Stinking Creek area, most remote and impoverished section of the county. This community petitioned the county superintendent to abandon the one-room school at Messer so they might have a meeting place.

Some of the people here did not understand the presence of strangers among them and shortly after the first meeting in the center, the building was dynamited. Instead of scaring local residents away, however, the explosion only created more interest and now Messer Center is one of the most active in Knox County.

Since this beginning communities have organized and community centers have been established all over the county. In March of 1966, when Messer celebrated its first anniversary, there were 13 organized communities, ten of which had buildings in which to have community activities.

Each Center has had some failures but all have managed to keep going and plugging away at the problems of poverty confronting them.

Eight of these centers have early childhood programs for pre-school children and all of them, even the ones without a regular meeting place of their own, have meetings with home economic aides, home improvement aides, recreation aides and other local people trained by the Knox County CAP to assist them with the problems of living on a meager income.

Each program of the Community Center Project is designed to work with the people through their community center.

Perhaps the biggest thing that has happened in the more than a year since the Knox County Economic Opportunity Council was formed has been the creation of a civic industry at Cannon.

The idea for a small factory was brought up at a community meeting and a committee was appointed to find out more about it. The committee contacted James Kendrick, who in turn referred them to Sonny Osborne of the Council of the Southern Mountains, who worked with them on this project.

Harold Wolfe, of OEO, talked to the community and explained the necessary steps in getting an industrial enterprise launched. At present, it looks as if the industry will begin production within the next thirty days in a rented building while a new one is built.

Community action in Knox County is both group effort and individual victory. Here are personal human "success" stories:

Leroy was just out of high school but jobless when a VISTA Volunteer and the local community center director visited his home. He wanted work and had applied several places but with no luck. They recommended he apply for a job as a recreation aide with the Knox Council; he did, and was hired. He worked for a couple of months then got a job in a local supermarket where he had applied and been turned down before.

Fred had been trying to draw welfare, Social Security, or some other type of "rocking chair money" for several months. He became convinced he was sick and that somebody else should take care of him. As a result, he almost starved to death. Since he was involved in center activities, the director of the community center worked with him and tried to get him to use his skill —carpentry. The medical social worker talked to him several times, the man came into Barbourville to make out an application for employment with the Council and he is now on the recommended list to be hired.

Willie did not take part in center activities when Messer center first opened even though he lived within 50 yards of the building. Then the community put on a series of local "grand Ole Opry" programs. Knowing that Willie played the guitar, they invited him to take part. He did so, then his son began to attend the "Opry" programs, started singing with them, and soon took part in other center activities. First Willie was interested only in guitar playing, then started working with the center in volunteer roles. Willie was then elected a member of the Community Council, next was named to represent Messer on the Association of Neighborhood Councils, then was elected to the governing board of the Knox County Economic Opportunity Council.

THE CHARGE CARD PROGRAM is a method by which people who need clothing can buy it by working at the community centers. Used clothing is donated for this purpose by people throughout the county. They receive a card which is worth ten dollars in used clothing, which they can work off at the rate of $1.25 an hour at any of the community centers. One woman, 36 years old, the mother of eight, draws a welfare because her husband is disabled, has used fifteen charge cards. She keeps her children well-dressed, and she and the children also join in all the center activities. Another woman came into the center for the clothing, took a course in ceramics offered through the center, and has sold a couple of her works. Her oldest daughter, who has two illegitimate children, came down to get some clothing on a charge card, and now is working with the CHARGE CARD PROGRAM. She is learning to keep books, to figure and to deal with people.

DEXTER, 17 years old, had been in the Job Corps little more than a month when he came home for Thanksgiving. A VISTA Volunteer went to pick him up to catch his bus back to camp, but the boy had decided not to return. The Volunteer talked to him and convinced him that he should try it at least until Christmas. At present, Dexter is still in Job Corps, and is planning to extend his hitch to eighteen months.

EARLY CHILDHOOD teachers like to tell of the parents who become more aware of their community center, and of their community, because their children are enrolled in this program. Some who cannot read or write, now recognize the value of these skills. Some are learning that all "outsiders" are not to be distrusted, that there are people who will give them a chance to be more than freaks and curiosities.

Vista on the boot heel

It is noon in the boot heel of Missouri. This is Delta country, cotton fields and mud, terrain so flat it mocks Columbus and if ever you could reach the horizon, you'd fall off the world.

A girl wheels a gray sedan down one of the thin straight roads that divides the cotton fields and links one little town with another.

The car spins off onto a dirt road and bumps through a place called Hayti Heights. The Heights seems a village of woe. It is a collection of frame shanties perched on Delta mud. Even under the cheerful sun the Heights is scarred with sores of deep poverty. Shanties are sprung at the seams, yards are unpaved and fences sag. Rainwater from the night before fills the ditches at roadside. Grass hesitates to grow and only stuttering clusters of green weeds rise from the ground. The real vegetation is mechanical: little jumbles of junked metal (rusting hub caps, baling wire, tin cans, broken bottles.)

Small children, some half-naked, scamper through the mud and dirty gravel.

The girl gets out of the car and begins to walk the main road of this rural slum. Her arrival prompts

some villagers to edge forward on porches or peer out of shanty darkness. She waves warmly at each face she sees.

A woman on one of the porches says, "Morning, Marilyn."

"Why, Mrs. Gamble," she says, "Where have you been keeping yourself?"

"Been farming further down," the woman answers, pointing a hand south where the soggy brown earth spreads for an eternity.

"Well, I'm sure glad you're home today, I want to talk to you about growing cucumbers, making some money for yourself . . . soon as I see Mrs. Burroughs."

"All right, honey," says the woman, "I'm not going any place."

The girl tip-toes carefully across a gang-plank connecting road with shanty front yard. A stout dark woman appears in the doorway. She hugs the girl like a long-lost daughter home at last.

"Lord, Marilyn, I'm sure glad to see you."

The woman has trouble. The girl says, "I'm here to help in any way I can, Mrs. Burroughs." She and the girl go inside where they can talk about it.

The shanty door closes and another hour of Marilyn Miyakawa's life and work as a VISTA Volunteer among the poverty-stricken people of Southern Missouri unfolds.

There are 2,500 poor families in Hayti Heights just beyond the quiet town of Hayti and in her year there Marilyn has come to know most of them.

While Mrs. Burroughs explains her problems—"They cut me off the welfare" — and Marilyn makes notes, VISTA Volunteer Steve Stewart is driving down another Pemiscot County road toward the tiny hamlet of Gobler where he will help with a community meeting.

Marilyn Miyakawa

At the Hayti Community Action Agency, VISTA worker Sunny Shelton patiently coaxes words out of a small boy who suffers a speech defect. Sunny is a trained speech therapist. In the rear of the same building fellow volunteer Cynthia Hayes supervises a group of children rollicking in the new day care class made possible by OEO funds.

Fifteen miles away VISTA Volunteer Linda Guasasco sits in a dim frame building that serves as the North Wardell Community Center helping a small group of townspeople organize a Community Action Program.

These four young people, each fulfilling a mission as a Volunteer In Service To America, are one-quarter of a 16-volunteer contingent serving as War on Poverty soldiers in the remote Missouri boot heel, a section so named because it pokes down into Arkansas like a shoe into mud.

St. Louis is 250 miles northward. Memphis is 110 miles to the east and Pemiscot County where these four VISTAS's work is, in Marilyn Miyakawa's words "just here and forgotten completely."

The boot heel is an improbable place for a 20-year-old California college junior to be working in community organization but the beginning surreality has worn off for Marilyn and her fellow Volunteers. They feel thoroughly a part of the Delta, and the poor Delta people have come to accept them.

Marilyn's VISTA adventure began last year in her hometown of Sacramento, California. She was enrolled in the junior college there, in her second year, when "I saw this VISTA poster in the hallway of my college administration building. It showed this little kid sitting on the steps of a dilapidated house. A year's program of helping others and helping yourself. To me it meant a way to express youthful idealism so I picked up an application, sent it in and was accepted.

After six weeks' training at Northern Michigan University, Marilyn was assigned to Hayti, Missouri under the sponsorship of the Delta Area Economic Opportunity Corporation which co-ordinates anti-poverty programs in a five-county area of the Missouri boot heel.

"I moved into a broken-down, one-

room, no-stove, no-refrigerator, no-anything sort of apartment. It was horrible. Those first two months was a period of adjustment and I don't know how I got through it."

But she did. First she worked in the Pemiscot County Health Center. There she taught a baby-sitting class, "how to wash a baby, feed it, that kind of thing."

Reviewing what she regards as her time of initial agony, Marilyn said members that "one lady said she wouldn't rent to me, she wouldn't say why, but it turned out that it was because I was of Japanese extraction."

She laughed, "I was probably the only Japanese ever in this area but this lady decided she didn't like me anyway."

After her health center job, she was assigned to teach an adult basic education class but, like most Volunteers, Marilyn was beginning to feel her idealism stirring once she had adjusted to a strange land and her confidence began to build. The class was not enough.

"I began walking around Hayti Heights and making friends slowly and it sort of evolved that there was work to be done here and here was where I could make a contribution."

A beginning of hope grew as Marilyn trudged the dirt roads of Hayti Heights which is, in the brutal truth, the Negro slum outside Hayti. It is a community not officially attached to the city government and receives few services. It is an unremembered enclave.

In Marilyn Miyakawa's vision, if no one was to help the folks in the Heights, it was up to the people to help themselves. This was the idea she began to kick around quietly in her visits to her new friends in the Heights.

"I got kicked out of the Health Center in October. I guess they didn't like me."

The conflict here as accurately as she could pinpoint it was a clash of wills: youth versus tradition.

There was another touch of unpleasantness. The Delta area has traditionally been segregated racially. When Marilyn went apartment hunting a second time she re-

Indigenous leadership was there. Leroy Jones, of the Heights, had the energy and will and Marilyn had exceptional organizational abilities. With a few more brave spirits plumping for change, the Heights began to emerge from years of lethargy.

In December 1965 a people who had never been united in anything, people who depended on welfare assistance, now gently guided and nudged by this cheerful young Californian, found themselves launching a community group called the Hayti Heights Betterment Council.

Jones appointed block captains to act as community organizers. Each captain has a given area of the Heights to work with the job of finding out what problems impoverished people in the community had and then to bring them to the Council for action.

"I hoped that many of the problems in the Heights could be solved through community unification," Marilyn explained, "with community members bringing food, clothing, et cetera, to those in need. Additionally the Council is to serve as what you might call an unofficial city government since Hayti does not consider the Heights within its jurisdiction. The 2,500 people in the Heights will elect 12 Council members who in turn will elect a chairman and other officers. With the Heights organized as a unified group people here will be in a position to demand things they need like sewage, drainage and more social services."

Looking ahead Marilyn foresees a time when the Heights will be included within the city limits of Hayti but "until these poverty people can unite as one body, with a spokesman and some power behind them they will remain an entity of poverty. My hope is that through the Heights Council folks here will have a voice and get action to ameliorate their conditions."

In VISTA's Washington headquarters, officials reading Marilyn's reports from the field have been very impressed.

When referring to Volunteer Miyawawa, the usual preface in headquarters is . . . "this 20-year-old kid who organized a whole community single-handed."

But the true measure of Marilyn's value comes from her fellow Volunteers. She returns to school this fall. Cynthia Hayes who will replace Marilyn already knows her goal. "I just hope I can keep building on what you've started here in the Heights," she has promised.

Leroy Jones, the Heights leader, who helped Marilyn get the Council from dreams to reality, feels the winds of change. "I know my people want things, they want to do something for themselves." He was speaking at a DAEOC county meeting. "I can't put my finger on it but I know they don't ever want the old ways again."

And as the people of the Heights begin to move on their own initiative, begin making plans for paved roads, improved drainage, better sanitation, a community center; as the Heights begins its long climb upwards, such changes, that will come will come because Marilyn Miyakawa and her fellow VISTAs brought the needed spark of youthful idealism. The Heights people must match this with an idealism of their own.

It is one hour past noon on the Delta. Marilyn Miyakawa emerges from Mrs. Burroughs cabin. "I'll come back tomorrow," she says. "I'll do anything I can."

Mrs. Burroughs sighs: "Child, I don't know what we'll do when you're gone."

Marilyn laughs. "Cynthia's going to be here. You won't even know I'm gone."

The woman forgets her own trouble. Her face stiffens. "Don't you ever think nothing like that, Marilyn. I mean that."

Marilyn laughs, waves goodbye and scoops up a baby boy from the road. He is just plain filthy. The girl hugs him and looks at him carefully. "What's wrong with his eye."

The young mother is on the porch. "I got to get his eye 'tended to. Down at the clinic."

"You sure have," says Marilyn. "I'll give you a lift if you have no way of getting there."

Marilyn jots in her notebook: "Take baby to clinic a.m. Thursday."

To a visitor watching, she says "Just a typical day. . . ." She shields her eyes against the sun, "You know there's nothing here, at least it appears that way, no culture, except the local movie, or TV from Memphis, nothing but mud and cotton and poverty but I am finding out that as it gets closer to leaving time, you suddenly realize in working with these people you've made friends and there *is* something here and wham! It sounds crazy but you find out that you love this place. Does that sound silly?"

Enthusiasm, impatience, compassion as well as surprising maturity and poise characterize the VISTA Volunteers working the Missouri Delta.

One almost legendary Volunteer is young Richard Klarberg who in the first months of the War on Poverty drafted several anti-poverty proposals for people in small Missouri communities who had not the faintest idea of what was required of them. Dick brought keen organizational ability and energy to the Delta, thus bringing several communities into the Federal funding procedure early. Otherwise programs in these localities might have been delayed interminably.

VISTA volunteer Steve Stewart who works the same region of the Delta as Marilyn Miyakawa (See story above) shares Klarberg's zeal for mobilizing communities.

"VISTA is most effective when there is nothing else in a community," he believes. "When we can come in on our own ahead of structured programs, we can really make a difference."

Steve Stewart

Steve, 22-year-old son of University of Colorado anthropologist Omer C. Stewart, will begin his second year in the Delta this month. He had graduated from the University of California at Berkeley and had begun graduate study in modern European history when he began to get restless. "I just decided I had to do something, and VISTA seemed closest to what I wanted to do."

Stewart's sponsoring body in the Delta area is the DELMO Housing Corporation, a pioneering agency in work with the rural poor.

He first worked in two villages with four other VISTAs implementing a program development grant.

"We surveyed, interviewed, wrote up preliminary action programs at the village level," he explained. "Then we submitted our neighborhood service centers to the regional OEO office in Kansas City for approval. While waiting for money for these projects to be released we did interim programming . . . teen clubs, romper rooms and helped villagers find the proper public agencies and programs that would help them economically and otherwise."

It was rough going at first, Steve recalled. "Some folks didn't trust me or the government or anything and they didn't think I would do anything except make promises. But we were able to get unemployed fathers into MDTA and things like that and won community confidence gradually."

Volunteer Sunny Shelton, 22, of Kingsport, Tennessee, joined VISTA after finishing Alabama College at Montevallo where she majored in speech therapy.

"I like this kind of work," she said, "First I was going into the Peace Corps but the more I thought about it the more sense VISTA made."

diate neighborhood they decided to open an afternoon play center for the children of their neighbors. "We figured we have a better chance of reaching adults if we give attention to their youngsters," said Sunny.

Each afternoon the two VISTA girls take a break in their regular community activity, break out milk and

Now Steve's activities are centered in Carruthersville, one of the larger Delta towns where he works with two poverty communities, one white, one Negro ("It's difficult. You can't convince the poor whites that they are poor and because of this you cannot bring the two groups together so you have to shuttle back and forth. It's time wasting and frustrating."

Her main concern is helping youngsters with speech defects. "I'd be right unhappy if this was to be changed . . . but I do want to step in and help keep the Hayti Heights program going when Marilyn Miyakawa leaves."

Sunny and Marilyn share a ramshackle little house in Hayti. To reach poor people in their

cookies and have story hours with kids who swarm through making the VISTA house their second home.

Another young Californian thousands of miles from home is Linda Guasasco, 21, of San Mateo. She joined VISTA while a junior at the College of Mateo. This was in June of last year.

Linda is based in Wardell, Missouri and works with villagers of two

Linda Guasasco

adjacent communities. She has been able to organize a Girl Scout troop, cooking classes, and other youth programs. "I am lucky at getting teenagers involved in programs," she points out. She obviously also has a knack for motivating adults as she started an adult basic education class in North Wardell and, as one of the VISTA volunteers who drew up the proposal for neighborhood centers in the Delta, she has stuck with the town elders as they assume responsibility for operating their own community projects.

It is a minor marvel to see a young woman subtly guiding much older folks through the intracacies of budgets, personnel policies, equipment purchasing and program planning but Linda and the other Volunteers manage to do this without incurring antagonism or seeming like "pushy" college people.

"It's a matter of judging when to speak up and when to shut up," she said. "I learn from them as much as they learn from me."

Marilyn Miyakawa – Cynthia Hayes

Cynthia Hayes, 23, of Charleston, S.C., with Sunny Shelton is the newest VISTA in the Delta. She and Sunny trained at Chapel Hill, N.C. A 1965 graduate of Morris College, Sumter, S.C. majoring in biology, Cynthia was home for the summer when a chance trip to the post office led her into VISTA.

"I saw a VISTA poster there. I knew little about it then except that it meant helping the poor so I sent in an application, was accepted and came directly from training to Hayti, and my first job was teaching a Head Start class."

She now divides her time between pre-school classes and community organization. As she becomes more acclimated to Delta life and problems, she plans to assume more projects. Both she and Sunny Shelton, fast friends and fellow Southerners, have pledged themselves to pushing the Hayti Heights Council programs initiated by Marilyn Miyakawa.

The staggering of VISTA tours of duty in any given community assures continuity of help to the impoverished, but as borne out by the varied work-styles of these four volunteers, it also provides that a community benefits by the differing points of view each volunteer brings to the job.

RALPH MATTHEWS, JR.

Alinsky vs. Bookbinder

a debate between a critic of the war on poverty and one of its leaders

Saul Alinsky, 57, "professional" organizer of poor communities, is a native of Chicago. He is executive director of the Industrial Areas Foundation, a network of community organizations, established in 1940 with the backing of philanthropist Marshall Field and labor unions. Known as a militant, grass-roots leader, Mr. Alinsky has long advocated and practiced involving poor people in cohesive power groups that agitate and pressure for improved housing, employment and economic status. The son of immigrant parents, Mr. Alinsky graduated from the University of Chicago. Archeology was his major but in post-graduate study he turned to the science of criminology. Following this he joined the Illinois State Division of Criminology and made a study of the Capone gang.

In the late thirties he turned to social action. In 1938 he organized meat slaughterers into the pioneering Back Of The Yard Neighborhood Council which won better job conditions for stockyard workers. He formed the IAF in 1940. More recently Mr. Alinsky has directed low-income community action in such cities as Rochester, Detroit, Syracuse and Kansas City, Missouri.

His militant philosophy of grass-roots organization was detailed in his book "Reveille for a Radical" and he is now completing a new work, "Rules for Revolution."

The War on Poverty was the theme of a debate between Saul Alinsky, pioneer organizer of the poor, and Hyman G. Bookbinder, an assistant director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, in Baltimore near the end of April. The confrontation between a vigorous critic of the anti-poverty program and a high-ranking government official charged with implementing the Economic Opportunity Act, produced an enlightening, if predictable, difference of views.

Excerpts from the debate—which was sponsored by the League of Women Voters—are published here with the understanding that the views of neither speaker are necessarily representative of the policies of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

Hyman H. Bookbinder, 50, is Assistant Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity. As head of the Office of National Councils and Organizations, he is responsible for the various advisory councils to OEO and for liaison with the nation's private groups.

Mr. Bookbinder serves also as Special Assistant to the Vice President of the United States, who has overall coordinating responsibility for the War on Poverty.

Mr. Bookbinder served from December 1962 to February 1964 as organizer and first director of the Eleanor Roosevelt Memorial Foundation.

During the years 1961 and 1962 Mr. Bookbinder served as special assistant to Secretary of Commerce Luther Hodges.

For seven years prior he was legislative representative for the CIO and the AFL-CIO, handling Congressional liaison for a wide range of social and economic subjects. He was also an economist for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America between 1940 and 1950, except for the time spent in the Navy during World War II.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Mr. Bookbinder received his degree in Social Science from the College of the City of New York in 1937, and did graduate work at New York University and the New School for Social Research.

BOOKBINDER STATEMENT

The first time I met Mr. Alinsky was about six months ago after he'd gotten through speaking in New York. I went over to him at the end, and I said "Mr. Alinsky, my name is Bookbinder. I'm from OEO."

He replied "OEO? Aren't you scared to talk to me? Won't you be fired?"

I answered, "No I don't think so. Not only am I not scared to be seen talking to you but I look forward to the day when we might be sharing a platform." That happy day has come.

The issue today is *not* Saul Alinsky —although that would be a very fascinating subject—but rather the nation's War on Poverty. I do want to stipulate for the record that I have no quarrels with Alinsky or "Alinskyism." I really do believe that he has made important contributions to the American social scene —and that in our pluralistic society there is room for "Alinskyism." Most of what he has done or said I find quite unobjectionable. Anything he does or says to help a human being gain a greater sense of strength, of power, of self-worth, of dignity, is a plus in my book. There are many plusses that Alinsky has put in my book.

But the issue today is the War on Poverty.

Let's get one thing straight now. I do not think that the war against poverty is good enough or big enough.

Those of us who are in the program know at least as well as Saul Alinsky how much is yet to be done. Every time we must say no to an applicant, every time we encounter delays, every time a staff person turns out to be inadequate to the task, every time we fail to get a community to agree on a project, every time only one or two percent of the poor come out and vote—these are defeats and discouragements that we feel keenly because we're there. We're trying to get better results!

There are millions of poor people who are not yet reached by this poverty program. They are disappointed, they are unhappy, and they are impatient. And so are we. So is Mr. Shriver. So is the President. So is the Vice-President.

But there is another side to this ledger, and I want to make some entries. These two years have been great eye-opening, conscience-pricking, program-developing years. They have been years which—I dare say —Alinsky, when he was writing "Reveille for Radicals" 20 years ago, never dreamed he'd see this country embarked on.

Here is a quick report of what I think has happened in the War on Poverty so far:

First, the major battle, in my scale of values, has been won already. That major battle was to get American credibility, acceptance of the fact that we do have a disgusting problem of poverty in this country. The American people now believe what they didn't believe when Harrington first wrote his remarkable book "The Other America". They know there is an "other America" of more than 30 million people living in adject poverty and they're beginning to do something about it.

Secondly, there is greater understanding among all of us that poverty is no single, simple phenomenon that can be cured by a single, simple program or under a single slogan such as "organize for power." There are many kinds of poverty in America—and they cry out for many, many programs with each one to combat a special aspect or by-product of poverty. The poverty in the Baltimore ghetto is not the same as the poverty of Appalachia, and it is not the same as the poverty problems of young widows and divorcees with young children whereever they are. It's not the same as the poverty of the aged or of the American Indians or of migrant labor.

So many programs are needed. One of the greatest falacies of some who are critics of this program is to think that the War on Poverty is OEO. Some critics are even more simple-minded and think the whole War on Poverty goes to the issue as to how many local residents serve on a CAP board.

But the fact is we're moving on many fronts. And so the third major achievement in the War on Poverty thus far is that it has encouraged, it has inspired important action in many fields. Let me tick some of them off for you—the Appalachian Regional Commission Bill—over a billion dollars to start economic development; the Economic Development Administration—similarly a multi-billion dollar program; the first major breakthrough in Federal Aid to Education because it was poverty-oriented—more than a billion dollars; new programs in health and housing and Social Security improvements; Medicare, which got the final push because it was in the context of the war against poverty; the Older Americans Act. All of these things are part of the War on Poverty.

This year, we'll see more action. We'll see an increase in the minimum wage; we'll see improvements, I hope, in unemployment compensation.

The next major victory in my book is that we've gotten all kinds of

establishments moving. Yes, the establishment is a whole range of establishments. The League of Women Voters is one part of the establishment. The labor movement is part of the establishment and the Federal establishment is part of the establishment; and we're moving them all. Just recently, the Bureau of Indian Affairs was basically reorganized, prodded and stimulated by the understanding that comes out of the anti-poverty program. The Agriculture Department in 1966 isn't the same Agriculture Department that it was in 1960, or 1962 or even 1964. The United States Employment Service is reorienting its work and is now more concerned about the disadvantaged than it ever was before. The Office of Education is moving with concern for the disfranchised. The Welfare Administration—why, two years ago the social workers were ready to throw us down the drain. Many of them still do but they've made some adjustments we've forced upon them —and we're a little bit friendlier than we were two years ago.

The educators of this country have had to make adjustments in their own standards of behavior, and the labor movement has made some changes already. These are important, if not calculable, advantages for the War on Poverty.

But now, let me get to the OEO itself. We have now developed programs that you know about. They are not good enough, they are not reaching enough people but they have already begun to touch in meaningful ways the lives of millions of poor people. Our objective is not to make poor people happier in their poverty but to get them out of poverty. So we've had programs like Job Corps—a difficult, back-breaking program but it's beginning to work, and several thousand young men and women who a year ago couldn't pass a physical exam or a mental exam for the Armed Services now are either back in school, in the Armed Services or on jobs. Six hundred thousand young men and women have already had Neighborhood Youth Corps jobs. Over 15,000 have had work study assignments so they can continue going to college. Upward Bound will reach 20,000 difficult kids—difficult in terms of academic achievement—and help them get into college and stay there. And with Head Start—if we close shop tomorrow, I think the

lasting memorial to OEO, to the poverty program, is that it has revolutionized the whole concept of pre-school education and development work.

And now the major thing in OEO, the issue on which Saul Alinsky and I agree. I stress that we agree. There is nothing more important that has to be done on behalf of the poor in this country than to give them a sense of belonging to the community —that they are the community—that they have something to contribute—that they can help determine their future. In this area I pay my salutes to Mr. Alinsky. He's done something in this area. But what he has done on a retail basis for 30 years with uneven results, we are now doing on a wholesale basis—with uneven results, too. But we're beginning to move.

Illustrating this — 8,000 men and women who two years ago were just like any other people living and working and stultifying in their respective communities are now recognized community leaders, serving on their CAP boards, governing councils, advisory councils. Next week, there'll be more than 8,000, and next month, more than that. Twenty-five thousand other poor people are working for the poverty program as staff people, outreach workers, counselors and advisors, working for the poverty program and getting that sense of recognition as well as that sense of participation and employment. This is a revolution that's going on in the anti-poverty program today. It's a revolution of which Saul Alinsky and others dreamed.

Now there can be—and there should be—and there is—criticism of what we've done. But it has been said that the best is sometimes the enemy of the good. If we had waited for a *perfect* poverty program, with every blueprint in order and full success guaranteed in advance, we would still not be engaged in battle. We'd still be haggling over rules, procedures, percentages. Instead, we went to work. We got going—imperfectly at times—but with a willingness to experiment, and to modify, and to change as improvements seemed in order. If we had insisted that every community give us a letter-perfect plan before it could start doing work for the poor, there might not be any programs in the country today. But there are 750.

I think that Saul Alinsky should really be the best friend this program ever had. I think he should be delighted that the dream he dreamt so well, that the things he wrote so eloquently over the years are now part of a national commitment, that at long last we are beginning to give those who've been left out a sense of participation—a sense of power, if you will. For some reason, he doesn't choose to be happy but I tell you, victory may not be around the corner, but it's on its way.

ALINSKY STATEMENT

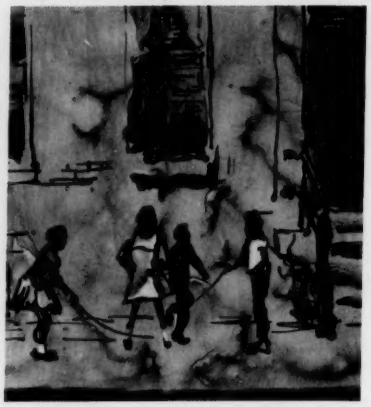
I'm concerned about issues. I'm not here for any personal defense or for being prefaced by "the issue is not Alinsky or Alinskyism."

What I'd like to talk about is the issue that is at hand, and that is the concern about doing something about the condition of poverty in America.

According to Harrington's book there are around 33 million people in our society who are poor. If we take the maximum definition, if we take Leon Kayserling's position in which the income is higher as far as the definition of what constitutes poverty, I don't think we would go much beyond 45 million. The chances are that our next population census is going to run in surplus of 200 million. This means that for the first time in civilization a society has a minority which is the poor. This also means that for the first time in history we have a chance of really being able to bring to bear the resources of our society to do something about poverty — to do something very effective—to try if possible to get rid of it.

The funds are, as everyone has agreed, very inadequate. As a matter of fact when the first poverty allocation was announced, just by coincidence the *Wall Street Journal* carried on the same day a detailed write-up and examination of the pet food industry of America. It turned out that the profits of the pet food industry of the United States were twice as much almost to the penny as the appropriation for the poverty program, which I can see gave rise to certain waggish thoughts that the poor would be better off to be adopted as pets—twice as well off than under the appropriation of the poverty program.

Even today, the present appropriation—I think you ought to know this to keep your general financial bearings on it—has approximately 550 million dollars less than General Motors' 1965 profit. As a matter of fact it was even less than General Motors' tax bill, what they paid in taxes this past year.



Now when we're talking about poverty, let us know what we're talking about. Anyone who is even pseudo-literate on the issue of the politics of poverty—when I use the word "politics" I'm using the word strictly in the Greek sense of people living together—knows that poverty has been a dual problem, a dual monster so to speak. It's been a two-sided coin. One side is a lack of economic wherewithal and the other side is the lack of power. By "power" I mean exactly what Webster's unabridged defines it as—simply the ability to act, the ability to be able to act, to do something about one's own position, to be part of the human society, to be a full person, to have what religious people call dignity.

Specifically for a Negro in Mississippi this means having money but as long as he is denied representation in his own government—as long as he is denied opportunities on how to spend that money—as long as he lacks any protection in the courts or with the police—as long as he can be murdered with impunity by any white man who has no more to fear than a possible Federal conviction for the infringing upon the civil rights of his murder victim and a possible 10-year sentence — which means a 3-year maximum—so long shall that Negro be poor. And this is the basic issue we're confronted with.

I have no reservation in my own mind that the men who worked in drawing up the poverty program were guided by the highest of intentions. They're men who are sufficiently politically literate to understand this point. This was very probably what was behind such items as the "maximum feasible representation of the poor." This is certainly what was behind the Community Action Program.

At the time these programs were first being brought about, the various communities sat down to talk it over. My position at that time, which was not public—parts did come out in public—were that this created a real paradox. I had strong reservations as to whether or not it could work out. It isn't that we are opposed to Federal resources and Federal government; I mean Federal funds and the role of the government. On the contrary, we have problems in low-income areas that can only, regardless of the maximum participation that you can get, be resolved through Federal aid.

There was simply a very serious doubt, regardless of the good intentions of those in Washington, that it would be possible to break through that power level of mayors and city halls all across the country. We felt, from what has happened, that the mayors and city halls would not

brook the development of independent action organizations which might turn around and challenge them on issue after issue, such as independent action organizations do. These were the things that were on our minds.

We also had a very serious concern about the issue of representation of the poor, and from an entirely different angle. You can have 100 percent representation of the poor on the board in Chicago but if Congressman Dawson picks them, you haven't got anybody on there. We'd much rather have the establishment than to have 100 percent of that.

But the question was "How are you going to get representation?" After all, a poor person just by being poor doesn't represent the poor. A Negro, just by being a Negro, doesn't represent Negroes anymore than a Jew represents Jews by being Jewish. In fact, the only way that you can get legitimate, bona fide representation is to have an organized base. And this organization either elects or selects its representatives and says to the other group, "These are the people that we have designated to represent us."

We have never taken the position that representation of the poor should be 30 percent or one percent or 60 percent. That's going way ahead of the cart.

The basic issue is how do you get bona fide representation. As I said before, that involves organization. Now this was our general situation until the poverty program went to war against us and—as far as we could see—almost every independent action organization in the country.

I will be specific. The Woodlawn community in Chicago is a large Negro ghetto with approximately 125 thousand people. The figures vary between 150 and 125. The Woodlawn community was organized. That organization came into being with much, much conflict, and it then became recognized by the city administration as representing the community. It was the representative in terms of, say, collective bargaining with city hall as far as urban renewal. We took the position that the way urban renewal was operating it was, in fact, Negro removal. We were for urban renewal but we didn't want it this way. As a consequence we got together a committee of 13 of which seven were of the Woodlawn organization, including the chairman, with full authority on doing all the planning.

The plans that are now under way have even got the plaudits of the city planning groups with it. We're redeveloping the community ourselves—not to be pushed out into another slum and into worse situations.

The same thing went on with psychiatric programs, the same thing with educational programs, the same thing with the slum landlords. Over and over, this was the situation.

When OEO came along, the war began. They put up their urban progress center, which we call in Chicago "baby city hall". They hired 200 community aides and went around the neighborhood telling people don't go to the Woodland TWO organization. "We've got a direct pipeline to city hall. Come to us if you've got any problems. Stay away from there."

As things stand today, a Community Action Program can be a community action program until it has its first consultation with city hall. That becomes the end of it. This has been the sad experience. But that is not a problem that concerns us. What is the problem is the very struggle for survival that is going on in terms of independent action groups.

FOSTER GRANDPARENTS

a matching of needs

At 77, Mr. Frierson will tell a visitor, "I'm happier now than I've been in 30 years," and he'll talk about his new bride and his twelve new children.

"I've gained 15 pounds—just from being satisfied. It's good for me. I've gained so much weight, directly I'll have to get some more clothes."

Mr. Frierson discovered his new wife—"the first time I met her, we started our courtship right there. In one month and one day after that, we were married"—and acquired his new children as a Foster Grandparent in a Tampa, Florida, tuberculosis hospital.

Along with sixteen other Foster Grandparents, Mr. Frierson was hired and trained to work in a hospital ward where tubercular children from poor families are kept for long-drawn months of therapy, seldom visited by their real families.

"When we first came here," Mr. Frierson says, "the children were almost wild. They didn't get attention, not even water as often as they wanted or needed it. Some of them didn't even know how to say 'yes' or 'no' or 'I thank you'. We've taught them all that."

"I notice a marked change," he

says. "Those who couldn't eat by themselves have learned to eat; we've even taught them table manners."

"We never put the pie on the shelf too high for the children to reach," he explains. "We just come right down to earth and play with them and shoot marbles with them and use plain talk."

Mrs. Brandstatter, another Foster Grandparent, agrees: "They didn't know anything when we came here. They just seemed like they didn't know enough to play when we came —I don't know why. But now, you should hear them laugh."

"They need a lot of loving," she says. "I don't care what child it is."

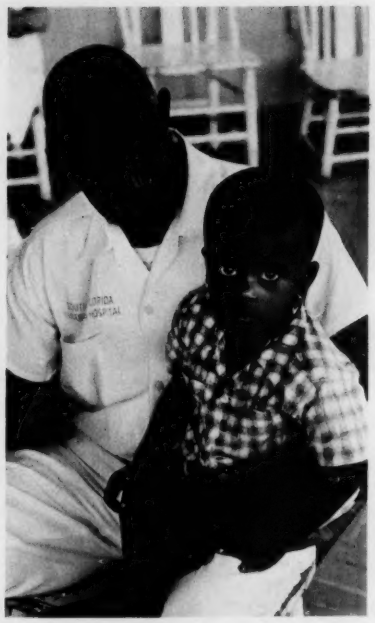
"We taught them what an airplane was," Mrs. Wright, another Grandparent, adds. "Now when they see an airplane go by, they get so excited, they just scream and holler."

"And they love to play in the water, now, and just splash and play," Mrs. Wright says. "I wouldn't take anything for working with these children."

The Tampa program, like more than 30 other such War on Poverty projects throughout the country, is matching older persons who need purposeful work and a source of income with children often in desperate need of attention and affection, and filling some of both their wants.

Working in hospitals and institutions where poor children are lacking the emotional attention and basic instruction that are needed to avoid stunted development, the Foster Grandparents have been among the more immediately successful of the nonprofessional workers upon whom the War on Poverty so thoroughly depends.

The program is not without controversy, of course—the hospital



staffs have sometimes resisted the Grandparents' initial efforts, resenting the suggestion that they cannot take care of the children themselves and fearing the inevitable comparisons—nor is it without drawback. Critics of the program point out that the Grandparents have yet to be brought into the mainstream of Community Action where they could work with the children's parents, involving them in other poverty projects; and, too, there is the danger that their work will be wasted when many of the children leave the institutions and return to unattending families.

But, like the Head Start pre-school effort, the Foster Grandparent program can open for a child a world once denied.

It is no "Rise, healed!" undertaking, but the work that has been done with great numbers of the children has been extraordinary. In Denton, Texas, a child who had once spent virtually all his time facing into a corner, cringing whenever someone approached, now "plays patty-cake, pats his foot, goes to the dinner table and sits facing into the room," since his Foster Grandparent started showing him attention he had seldom known. In Morganton, North Carolina, a child who once insisted on being carried everywhere she went, now happily walks with her "Grandma". In San Antonio, a child with frequent epileptic seizures has been calmed by his Foster Grandparent and now has his affliction in control. And in Cincinnati, an eleven-month-old girl with brain damage, who once did not move at all, now smiles and turns her head in the direction of her Foster Grandmother's voice.

Even at that, Mr. Williams, a 66-year-old Tampa Grandparent, insists, "We need these children more than they need us."

Waging the War

SARGENT SHRIVER SCHOLARSHIPS, financed by the Experiment in International Living, have been awarded to seven young men and women from poverty areas. The scholarships, named to honor Mr. Shriver's contribution to the spirit of self-help and world-wide community action, will finance separate travels of the winners overseas, where they will observe anti-poverty efforts in developing countries. The young travelers will live with a native family for one month and then work with Peace Corps volunteers and Experiment teams the following month.

The scholarship winners were nominated first by a local anti-poverty agency and then by OEO regional offices for their leadership in fighting poverty. The winners include Alfredo Ribot, of Bridgeport, Connecticut, a Neighborhood Youth Corps worker going to India; Barry Lee Reid, of Salisbury, North Carolina, a Neighborhood Youth Corps worker going to Germany; Patricia Anderson, of Jackson, Mississippi, a Head Start volunteer going to Peru; Judy Ann Evenson, of Osseo, Wisconsin, a College Work-Study student going to Iran; Carol Ann Pre-Jean, of Lafayette, Louisiana, a Head Start volunteer going to Turkey; Robert Jones, of St. Louis, Missouri, a Community Action worker going to Pakistan; and Martha Fontanez, of Los Angeles, California, a VISTA Volunteer with migrant Indians in New Mexico going to California.

Photo by Martin Karp

PORTABLE LIBRARIES will soon be carried by VISTA Volunteers to those residents of impoverished areas who don't have access to public library facilities. The suitcase libraries contain books for preschool and school-age children, books for adult education and literacy instruction and instructional material to guide VISTA Volunteers in helping the poor. Financing this demonstration project is the Fund for the Advancement of Education.

FORTY-NINE JOB CORPSMEN, training at the Job Corps program in Santa Rosa, California, will begin duties soon as resident workers in different Job Corps centers around the country. As resident workers, these Job Corps graduates will instruct and counsel enrollees, plus assist in a variety of daily chores and provide leadership and guidance to the new Job Corpsmen. With firsthand knowledge of poverty and the opportunities of Job Corps training, these new center assistants can be valuable in helping the professional staff of the centers.

THIRTY-FOUR NEW LEGAL SERVICE PROGRAMS, financed by more than $6.3 million in Federal anti-poverty funds, went into operation last month. In practice in nineteen states, the programs will more than double the size of the existing OEO Legal Service Program, bringing the total funds invested to $10.7 million.

Announcing the grants, Sargent Shriver said, "Legal Services programs are an instrument for reforming legal doctrines which consistently work to the disadvantage of the poor and which strengthen the ability of the poor to contribute to and participate in the society at large."

Major programs announced were an $872,851 grant to the Office of Navajo Economic Opportunity in Window Rock, Arizona, to benefit 96,000 residents of the reservation; a $704,486 grant to Texas' Houston-Harris County Economic Opportunity Organization to benefit residents of Houston through a law program administered by the Houston Legal Foundation; two grants totaling $235,862 to the Chicago Committee on Urban Opportunity; a $282,258 grant to the University of Mississippi School of Law for a research and training program; a $745,637 grant to the Philadelphia Anti-Poverty Action Committee; a $243,831 grant to the Health and Welfare Council of Nassau County, New York, for a "circuit riding" program; and a $163,445 grant to the Honolulu Council of Social Agencies for statewide program to be administered by the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii.

OPERATION MEDICARE ALERT, a Community Action program, reached more than four and a half million older Americans in its effort to enroll the elderly poor for health benefits under the new Medicare legislation. Throughout the country, some 13,000 of the elderly poor themselves were employed to find and visit those who had not enrolled, to talk to them about signing up for Medicare health benefits before the first deadline expired. Assisted by 67,000 volunteers, the Medicare Alert workers helped register the older poor in 47 states, Puerto Rico and Guam, reaching many citizens who had never even heard of the Medicare opportunities because they did not read or speak English or were in very isolated areas. In Maine and Appalachia, Alert workers rode horses and mules to visit those living in areas where there was no access by road.

A WALRUS TUSK will be purchased by St. Augustine's Center for American Indians, a delegate agency of the Chicago anti-poverty program, to help a retired tusk-carver, taken off the wage-earning rolls while in a tuberculosis sanitarium, return to his profession. He expects to sell his works to the Chicago Museum of Natural History.

A RURAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY LOAN TO William J. Tedrow of Know Fork, West Virginia, awarded last month, is the one-thousandth such loan to be made in the state. The Tedrows, parents of six children, have been earning an annual income of $2,200 from their 56-acre farm in Wetzel County. The rural loan will help Mr. Tedrow refinance current debts, make repairs and additions they plan to make to the dwelling, plant one acre of raspberries and strawberries, and purchase a power saw, three beef cows and one dairy cow without an increase in their monthly payments. Their immediate plans include installing a bathroom and painting the exterior of the house.

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